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STORY OF JACK SCOTT AND BESSY SURTEES.

THE Scotts are an old and widely diffused Border clan. They have had many distinguished men amongst them; the greatest of all being the illustrious poet and novelist, of whose personal appearance and genial character some of us have still an agreeable remembrance. As an active pushing race, the Scotts have spread far beyond their native glens, crossed the Border, and settled in various parts of Northumberland.

In the early part of last century, there dwelt in Sandgate, an old-fashioned thoroughfare near the Tyne, outside Newcastle, a family of these Scotts, whose occupation lay among the barges and coal-traders on the river. They were an industrious, decent set of people, with no pretensions to gentility, and, as was reasonable, improved in circumstances from one generation to another. The family begins to emerge from obscurity in the person of William Scott, who is apprenticed to a coal-fitter in Newcastle. A coal-fitter is a kind of middle-man between the owner of coal-pits and shippers. He purchases the coal, transfers it to barges called keels, whence it is put on board ships in the river. The word keel, from an old Anglo-Saxon term, signifying a barque, is now lost to the general vernacular, but remains preserved in a popular ballad, *Weel may the Keel row*. The term also keeps its ground in relation to the coal-barges on the Tyne, where owners of keels are men of considerable substance. The William Scott we have been speaking of, rose by his steadiness and intelligence to be a coal-fitter and proprietor of keels, with numerous keelmen in his employment. With a view to keep his men from straggling away among public-houses, he for a time kept a house for their special accommodation, the sale of beer to them adding to his ordinary gains. This concern, however, as not being creditable to a man in his flourishing circumstances, was, after a time, dropped. From being an owner of keels, he, in due course, became an owner of ships, in which capacity few

men attained greater note on the Tyne from Newcastle to Shields and Sunderland.

William Scott was married in 1740 to a Miss Atkinson of Newcastle. It was a happy matrimonial alliance. Besides good looks and placid temper, the lady possessed an excellent understanding, along with all proper domestic accomplishments. A fortunate marriage for the owner of keels and ships! At the time that a child was about to make its appearance, the country was thrown into alarm by the rebellion in the spring of 1745. A rebel army was advancing on the Tyne. The gates of Newcastle were shut and guarded. In a condition which made her apprehensive of deeds of violence, Mrs Scott removed to the village of Heyworth, four miles distant, in the county of Durham. There she gave birth to a male infant; but there was a second child, and, in the urgency of the case, a medical practitioner was sent for to Newcastle. It was during the night; the gates were closed; as delay might be hazardous, the doctor was let down over the wall in a basket, and he arrived in good time to deliver Mrs Scott of a female child. The boy was named William, and we shall soon hear more of him.

It was Mrs Scott's destiny to 'fall into a family.' Returning to Newcastle after the rebellion was over, she again, after a time, had twins, a boy and girl, born on the 4th of June (the birthday of George III.) 1751. The boy was christened John—the John Scott, hero of our story, but who almost until middle life was best known by his friends as Jack, or Jack Scott. Master Jackey was a promising youth while still in petticoats, but scarcely more so than his brother William, who was from five to six years his senior. The two boys had good brains. They grew up fond of books, which is always a sign of acute intelligence, and both had a surprising memory. Of course, they had the ordinary unruliness of boys, performed pranks, and underwent the floggings at school, which at that time were considered a proper academic discipline. At the Free Grammar-school at Newcastle, under the management of the Rev. Mr Moises, they acquired a sound classical instruction, to which

they were largely indebted for their future advancement. William was sent to complete his education at Oxford; but the father did not contemplate sending Jack thither, considering the line of life he was likely to pursue. For one thing, Jack was a skilled penman. His handwriting was beautiful, and remained so during life.

Jack was otherwise accomplished. As a small, but handsomely made youth of fourteen, he was one of the best dancers in Newcastle. At the dancing-school, he signalled himself by his gallantry in helping the young ladies to put on their dancing-shoes, it being according to etiquette in those days to render this kind of service, and at the same time offer a small bouquet of flowers. In this way, Jack Scott grew up a beau, and was admired for the gracefulness of his manners. On reaching his fifteenth year, his father began to think what was to be done with him. Nothing seemed more suitable than to bring him up to his own trade as a coal-fitter. William, who, by his excellent abilities, had already gained a fellowship, and occupied the position of a college tutor, did not like the idea of seeing brother Jack a coal-dealer, and persuaded his father to send the lad to Oxford, where something better could be done for him. So, in 1766, Jack goes in the fly to Oxford, and is there entered as a member of the university. Here he did not shine so conspicuously as on the banks of the Tyne, and his Northumbrian burr was not in his favour. Yet he spent three years at college, shewed his splendid talents, and, like his brother, obtained a fellowship. In 1771, he wrote an English essay, and gained the prize for doing so—a matter of gratulation to the family.

While everything was going on swimmingly for high academic honours, Jack Scott, at twenty-one years of age, sacrificed all his prospects by a single act. In the course of a journey through the north of England, he attended church at Sedgfield in the county of Durham, and there saw, and instantly fell in love with Elizabeth Surtees, daughter of a banker in Newcastle. Bessy was under the charge of an aunt, to whom Jack contrived to procure an introduction, which opened the way for a conversation with the young lady. His fame as a prize essayist, united with his handsome personal appearance, and black sparkling eyes, gave him an advantage which proved irresistible. After an acquaintance of but a few days, Jack Scott and Bessy had pledged their troth to each other.

Miss Surtees had not yet come out. This important affair in a young lady's life was to take place at a ball given to the Duke of Cumberland—the duke of Culloden notoriety—at Newcastle on the 1st September 1771. Jack took good care to be at the ball, but disconcerted by seeing Bessy led out as a partner by the duke, and that she was ceremoniously treated as the 'belle of the ball,' he did not ask her to dance. For this shyness, he speedily made up. At the weekly assemblies, he not only danced with her, but openly shewed that he was an admirer. An arrangement in the rooms was favourable to the young pair. There was a large and a small apartment, with a lobby or stair-head between. In the dances, Jack made a point of dancing with Bessy down the long room into the lobby and the small room beyond—a circumstance he used gleefully to relate in his later days as a skilful piece of generalship.

These dances did not escape notice. The

Scotts were sorry that Jack had entangled himself so early in life, though they allowed his choice was unexceptionable. If he married Bessy, he would lose his fellowship, and where were his means of a respectable livelihood? As for the Surtees, they were furious at the notion of Jack Scott, son of a coal-fitter who once kept a public-house, aspiring to be a match for their daughter. Resolved to do all in their power to check the alliance, they sent Bessy off on a visit to a lady, a high connection in London; trusting she would there be looked after, and the fancy for Jack Scott driven out of her head. Bessy saw much fine company in London, figured at parties in Northumberland House, the Opera, and Ranelagh. Jack was not far off. He found means to have interviews with Bessy while walking under female tutelage in Hyde Park. On these occasions, there was a mutual determination to hold to their plighted troth. This being settled, Jack went for a short time to Oxford, and Bessy returned to her home in Newcastle. If Surtees imagined that the engagement with his daughter was broken off, he was mistaken. Bessy had secretly arranged to elope with her lover. We do not justify elopement. It is a paltry way of beginning an honourable married career. Surtees, however, was not without blame. He thought that he, as a banker, was a much grander person than any of the Scotts, and viewed the proposed marriage of his daughter with Jack Scott as a prodigious downcome in dignity. In reality, Jack was as good as he was, intellectually a much greater man; and the amusing fact is, that the whole Surtees family lived to see their error.

The plot now thickens in intensity. The night of November 18, 1772, was selected for the elopement. Mr Surtees, notwithstanding his affected grandeur, lived in a house above a shop in a street called the Sandhill. The shop was that of Mr Clayton, a clothier, who had for assistant a young man named Wilkinson, a friend of Scott. The dwelling of Surtees had an entrance separate from the shop, but its windows could easily be reached by a ladder from the pavement. Wilkinson had no difficulty in secreting a ladder, which at the time appointed he placed against the most westerly window; and down it, under cloud of night, slid Bessy Surtees into the arms of Jack Scott. The thing was well managed. At a respectful distance, a post-chaise was in waiting, and in it the pair drove off for Scotland. The road they took was that by Morpeth and Coldstream, by which they arrived next morning at Blackshields. Scott's design was probably to take fresh horses at Blackshields, and post on to Edinburgh, only two stages distant, where the marriage ceremony could have been effected; but having accidentally learned that the Rev. J. Buchanan, Episcopal minister at Haddington, was in the house, he invited that gentleman to officiate, which he did according to the form prescribed by the Church of England, and afterwards gave them a certificate to that effect. The newly wedded pair immediately retraced their route to Morpeth, where they resided for a day or two.

It need scarcely be said that Surtees was at first implacable in his resentment. The Scotts were more distressed than angry. As what, however, was done could not be undone, they sent their forgiveness, and invited Jack and his bride to their

dwelling. They came, and matters were so far made up. In a few months, there was a softening in the feelings of the old banker. He saw it was no use, or rather worse than useless, to stand out. There was accordingly a treaty of peace by the belligerents. Scott's father settled two thousand pounds on the newly wedded pair, and Mr Surtees settled one thousand pounds, a sum which he afterwards doubled. The annual proceeds were meant as a help to the young couple. They were literally penniless, and the small annual income from these gifts was all they could reckon upon till Jack could make his way in the world. To make the marriage doubly sure, the ceremony was solemnised afresh in the parish church of St Nicholas, Newcastle, 19th January 1773. That may be called the date at which Scott began his memorable career. He and Bessie drove off southwards across the Tyne. The world was all before them. Doubts and darkness hovered over the future; but in these young beings there was the spring of hope and intelligence, with a determinate resolution to fight the battle of life. Jack had formed his plan. It was to enter himself as a student at the bar, and reside during the period of probation at Oxford. He was admitted to the Society of the Middle Temple 28th January 1773. At Oxford, he delivered lectures, taught pupils, and so eked out his small income. Mrs Scott proved an admirable helpmate. Studying her husband's means, she made both ends meet. The only entertainments she gave were small tea-parties, and we learn with some interest that one of her occasional guests was Dr Samuel Johnson.

In studying for the bar, Scott made the most strenuous endeavours. Having taken his degree of Master of Arts, he plunged into his legal studies; rose at four in the morning; spent only a few minutes at meals; took little outdoor exercise; and sat up over his books till late at night. He also had the fortitude to keep his brain unclouded. His abstemiousness was as remarkable as it was exemplary. In the circumstances in which he was placed, he was a model husband; while Bessy, in her tender and loving way, and earnest devotion to his interests, was a model wife. The marriage had been a perfect success. The economising spirit of the pair was, if anything, augmented by the birth of a son in March 1774. Next year, being called to the bar, Scott—for we must drop calling him Jack—went to reside in London. His house was in Cursitor Street, near Chancery Lane, afterwards described by him as his first perch, to which in an evening he used to bring from Fleet market twopenceworth of sprats for supper. Success in the legal profession is only attainable by intense industry, a fair share of common-sense and tact, along with perhaps a degree of good-luck. Erskine was a surprising instance of a rapid rise to fortune. Thurlow also mounted suddenly by his ingenious reasoning and fervid oratory in the Douglas cause. Scott had not so good a chance, but he lost nothing in perseverance; and he was aided immensely by his powers of memory, as well as by acuteness of judgment. His slender means did not permit his becoming a pupil for twelve months under an equity pleader. For this deficiency he was partly compensated by being allowed gratuitously to study cases in the office of a kind-hearted conveyancer, and so stored his mind with details for practice, as a barrister.

We cannot go into a regular account of Scott's career. That is given better elsewhere by Lord Campbell. For several years he had little practice, and Mrs Scott's housekeeping, as may be supposed, was still on a moderate footing. But he never despaired, went upon circuit, and accumulated experience. His day of triumph came. In 1780, in an intricate contest as to the rights of an heir-at-law to rank as a residuary legatee, tried before Lord Thurlow, Mr Scott offered such convincing arguments as to gain the case for his client. His reputation was made. Briefs came in upon him, and ever afterwards he was at ease in his circumstances. In 1783, he received a silk gown. He about the same time, through his strong Conservative leanings, was elected member of parliament for Weobly. His appearances in the House of Commons, as has been the case of many noted lawyers, were disappointing. In 1788, he rose to be Solicitor-general, and received the honour of knighthood from the king. In 1793, he was promoted to be Attorney-general. Next, in 1799, he was made Chief-justice of the Common Pleas, and created Baron Eldon of Eldon in the county of Durham. Jack Scott, a peer! Bessy become Lady Eldon! How the news spread at Newcastle, and astonished everybody—the Surtees in particular, though they already had occasion to change their opinion concerning Bessy's marriage. Fortunately, Lord Eldon's venerable mother survived to see her son arrive at this distinction; and with proper filial affection, his first duty, on being raised to the peerage, was to acquaint her with the fact—signing himself ELDON. One does not learn without emotion that on receipt of the letter, the old lady burst into tears, and exclaimed: 'To think that I should live to be the mother of a lord!' What justifiable pride hath not a mother in the high worldly appreciation of her sons! It is about the most exalted sentiment in which humanity can indulge. Lord Eldon attained still higher honours. In 1801, on the dismissal of Wedderburn, Lord Loughborough, he was appointed Lord-chancellor of Great Britain.

Few men have had such a lengthened judicial and political career. Eldon was Chancellor under three successive administrations. His decisions were sound, and the chief fault imputed to him was his delay and hesitation in bringing suits to a final judgment. In the present day, his political views would be pronounced narrow and ungenial, though no one ever doubted his sincerity, and earnest desire to promote the best interests of his country. In private life, he was fond of jocularities, and untiring in his anecdotes about early struggles and acquaintances; often giving amusing accounts of incidents in which he had been concerned. He never affected to conceal his origin; and, as an instance of his goodness of heart, did not forget, on becoming Lord-chancellor, to confer a lucrative appointment on Moises, his old friend and schoolmaster at Newcastle.

In 1821, he was advanced to the dignities of Viscount Encombe and Earl of Eldon. His 'beloved Bessie' lived ten years to enjoy her new title as Countess of Eldon; and deeply did the Earl mourn her decease in 1831. He himself, after outliving almost all his immediate relations, died in his eighty-seventh year, January 3, 1838, leaving behind him a fortune of over half a million sterling. In his titles and estates he was succeeded by his

grandson. Lord Eldon's brother, William, had a scarcely less distinguished career. He, too, was a lawyer, and ultimately rose to be judge of the Court of Admiralty; in which position, as also in his knowledge of international and ecclesiastical law, he won high distinction. He was raised to the peerage as Baron Stowel; but at his decease in 1836, without male issue, the title became extinct. Lords Eldon and Stowel were two of the most remarkable men of their time. In their lives they presented a memorable instance of two brothers rising to eminence through sheer force of abilities which they are said to have had the good fortune to inherit from their mother. W. C.

SOME PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE WITH PARISH CLERKS.

THE first parish clerk with whom I ever came in contact was a character which has now disappeared, and which, when I look back, seems as if it never could have existed. I was ordained, oh, how many, many years ago it was, to a sea-side curacy. There were two churches, about a mile apart, and I had to walk along the cliffs to get from one village to the other. In the winter it was often quite dark when the afternoon service was over, and I set out on my return home. The path by the cliffs was narrow and dangerous by daylight; in the dark, it was impassable without a light. I used, therefore, to take with me a lantern, which I gave into the clerk's keeping when I went into church. Now this said clerk was a gaunt, gray old man, who had lived all his life amongst seafaring people, though without having himself been to sea, and by force of example had become as one of them. Before I had been in my curacy long, I found that most of the men were smugglers, and the clerk the prime mover on shore of the whole gang; and the way I found it out was this. Several times I had noticed, that as I was in the middle of my sermon, the church door would open, and a strange face would peep in; then in a minute one of the congregation would steal silently out, then another, and another, till, of the usual small assembly, the clerk and one or two more would be the only ones left. I could not help observing that, on these occasions, the clerk could scarcely keep himself in his seat, and that his hands nervously handled the lantern, which for convenience he had concealed under his desk. In a few Sundays, however, the end came. I suppose, as I was a new-comer, he was afraid at first to do what he did at last. One Sunday afternoon, just as I had got well into my discourse—sermons in those days lasted five-and-forty minutes, and were not much appreciated unless they contained plenty of firstlies, secondlies, thirdlies, &c.—a head popped in at the door; and whether there was a richer cargo to run than usual, I know not, but with the appearance of the head, a finger beckoned. One by one the congregation got up and went. By custom grown more bold, I suppose, they went with more noise than usual. Still my sermon went on, the clerk got more and more fidgety, till at last, standing up, and holding up the lantern to me in the pulpit, he whispered in his softest voice: 'Ull this be 'nuff, maester, to light 'ee hoame?' It is needless to say that I brought my sermon to an abrupt conclusion, and that for the future, when I saw a face look in at the door, and the congregation begin to go, I cut my discourse short, and dismissed those

who remained with my blessing. When the old clerk got to know me better, he told me all the mysteries of his craft; how a cargo was run—in what way the ship was signalled, and how the excise of the period were done; but I could never persuade him that his office of church clerk and defrauding His Majesty's customs were not quite consistent. Poor old clerk, his smuggling days are over long ago; but if he did nothing worse, as the offence was in those days esteemed, than run a few kegs of brandy, we may fairly say he rests in peace.

One of the most talked-of peculiarities of parish clerks is their ludicrous mistakes in the responding verses of the psalms and hymns. One finds, however, on inquiry, that the mistakes generally attributed to them occur in the uneven verses—namely, those which the clerk has not to say. However, there is no doubt that they do often read their portion of the service in anything but the modern method, and shew by their pronunciation that they have never received a first-class education at the inclusive sum of thirty-two guineas per annum. One old fellow, whom I used to sit over, would always read, 'Basteses and all cattul, warms and veather'd voulds,' not easily understood by the uninitiated reader, but easy of solution to any one who will turn to the authorised version for the last evening of the month. The same old fellow would always read 'stand in a wee, and sin not;' and nothing would persuade him what the three letters a-w-e really spelt. Then, again, one verse used to bring tears into our eyes every time that it recurred; and its repetition never took away the ridiculous sound of the old fellow's interpretation, as he read at the top of a by no means soft or pleasant voice: 'Thur go the shibs, and thur's that *lively thing*, whom thou's made take hee's bastime thurin.' The poor man's education had not cost much.

If one had to search for clerks of the most advanced type, I suppose the place to go would be to some far western neighbourhood. Devon and Cornwall have always been noted for these fussy and uneducated personages; and there, perhaps, they have still a lingering existence. In the more populous parts of England, they have been pushed aside by advancing manners and tastes. There are not many clerks to be destroyed now. Common-sense has generally done away with the duet between the parson and that functionary, and if there is not a decent choir, at all events the congregation now make the responses. Still, here and there the old stamp of clerk remains, and it has been my lot to come across two decided specimens within the last few years.

One of these was at an important parish church in the suburbs of London. The curate was harassed and overworked, and one Sunday he asked me to say afternoon prayer, and take some baptisms for him. I consented willingly, and that afternoon went through one of the most trying scenes that it has been ever my lot to undergo since I have been ordained. I had only been in the church once before, at a confirmation, and the cold oppressiveness of that service and ceremony prepared me in some way for what I should experience. What happened, however, exceeded all my apprehensions. When I went into the vestry, a fussy stout man, something between an idle cobbler and a station-master at a very small station, presented himself:

'Most time to go in—here's the surplice.' I put the surplice on. It was large enough for three clergymen, and I had much difficulty in finding my hands, and when I walked, it was at the imminent risk of tripping up and falling flat on my face. However, I managed to put on a hood, and then the fussy man produced what he called a scarf: a long broad silk band, like what I had seen noblemen's chaplains and doctors of divinity wear. Not liking its appearance, and being already overburdened with clerical garments, I meekly said: (for I was much afraid of the fussy functionary) 'I don't wear that sort of thing.' 'But every one does.' 'I don't,' I said, still meek. 'But you must.' 'I don't'; this time a little more positively. 'But you must; every one as comes here does.' Now, I don't like to be bullied. Naturally of a meek temperament, if bullied, I was determined, so I said firmly: 'I shall not,' and turned away. That point settled, his clerkship observed: 'Time to go in. I goes first; you give out the hymns. Four baptisms after second lesson. Now, then!' Off he trudged, and I followed. Having been duly ushered into a box, and the door shut and fastened, having duly said my prayer, I began the service.

The congregation consisted of some school children, here and there a servant in the high box pews, and in the gallery two or three singers, who sang the canticles in a gentle kind of way, as if they had had too much dinner, to a very loud and spasmodic organ accompaniment, as of an organ that had been beered, instead of oiled, about the pedals. Things progressed very fairly, till after the collect for the day. True, the clerk had all the responses to himself, and sometimes he forgot them. He was out of sight, down below somewhere, so that I could not see in what position or state he was in. After the collect for the day, however, came a loud, and, as if a waking-up, amen; and just as I proceeded to begin the second collect, a hand, unseen, from the side somewhere, pulled my surplice, and a sleepy voice half-whispered: 'You be get too far'; and then, as I took no notice, but went on, the same voice, in a more wakeful tone, added: 'No, you bean't, though; go on'; and the voice and hand retreated somewhere down below, where I suppose it had been before. Then came the baptisms, in which, what with the old fellow's homeliness of manners, and the squalling of the babies, there was a most unpleasant want of reverence. When one of the sponsors was going off before the service was over, the clerk indecorously called to her all down the church: 'Here you be to come back.' Well, I never saw that old clerk again, nor do I wish to do so; but I know, that in the vestry, after the service was over, he charged two shillings for each baptism, and explained his conduct in church by saying he thought I had got beyond the third collect, and forgotten the hymn!

The second specimen was clerk of the church of which I myself for some years was vicar. When I entered on the living, I would willingly have got rid of the man if I could; for besides being of not the best of characters, he was very deaf, and continually saying amen at the wrong times and wrong places. However, I could not get rid of him myself, and my bishop having plenty to do without attending to his own business and his own diocese, refused to interfere, although I reported his clerk-

ship for turning up one Ash-Wednesday with a black eye. However, I shelved the old fellow, by putting him in the choir, where, after vainly trying to say amen when the choir sang it, his voice was drowned, and at last he subsided into silence. There he is now, and will, I suppose, remain, a clerk in name, but not in sound, until his life's end.

And now I come to my last clerk. I only came into possession of him a few weeks ago. He is seventy years old. What he has been in years past, I know not, but of this I am sure, that he never has, and never will, make any blunders in the responses, for the first thing he said to me on my arrival in the parish, was: 'Doanee tak no notus o' mee. I'm a poore ign'rant ould fella. I can't zay it ater ee, for I was na'er larned to read.' With this incident, we will let the clerks rest. They are getting fewer and fewer, and I suppose, before long, will be things of the past, like double-basses, serpents, and clarionets. Their loss will not lessen the decency and order of our church services, though it may displease the lover of old times and old manners.

A MOMENTOUS LIFE IN INDIA.

It is doubtful whether any three brothers, serving their country in one of her distant possessions, ever did and suffered so much, deserved so well, and gave so useful an example of duty, firmly, judiciously, and fearlessly performed, as John, Henry, and George Lawrence. The first of them has obtained the distinction—as some men count distinction—of a peerage; the second sleeps in a glorious grave; and the third has lately published to the world his *Reminiscences of Forty-three Years in India*. And what years were those, and what critical periods did they include! During those forty-three years, he who is now Lieutenant-general Sir George Lawrence, K.C.S.I., C.B., was intimately and personally acquainted with the events which preceded, accompanied, and followed the ever memorable disaster of Cabul. He was himself 'given as a hostage, and remained eight and a half months in captivity.' He was, meanwhile, 'in almost daily communication with Sirdar Mahomed Akbar Khan and other leading Afghan chiefs; and the opinion he formed of their character ought, therefore, to be carefully considered by those with whom it rests to decide upon the policy to be adopted by us in our dealings with the Afghans. In 1846 he became the chief political authority at Peshawur; he struggled heroically against the tide of the great Sikh revolt; he was at length overpowered, made prisoner, and kept in captivity and imminent peril; and to him, when the Sikh leaders were rendered hopeless by defeat, 'they applied frequently for advice, and made him the channel of confidential communication between themselves and the British government.' In March 1857, he was appointed 'agent for the whole of Rajpootana; and so successful was his administration, that, 'during the momentous period between May 1857 and February 1859, when our power in India was shaken to its foundation, not one of the nineteen states or princes of Rajpootana wavered in loyalty, or withheld a cheerful and hearty support to the paramount power.'

So much by way of prelude. The reminiscences of a man who was so great a part of so notable a

portion of history, deserve to be considered more in detail. George Lawrence was one of the Honourable East India Company's almost innumerable good bargains. He attended the Military College of Addiscombe; received a cornetcy on their Bengal establishment; arrived at Calcutta on the 10th of September 1821, and was immediately posted to the 2d Regiment of Light Cavalry. 'Mind you study the native languages, sir,' was the excellent advice he received from the Governor-general (Hastings), with whom he had the honour to dine. He joined his regiment at Keitah, in Bundelcund, on the 15th of January; nine months after was placed in charge of a troop; two years later became lieutenant and adjutant, and held the adjutancy until 1834, when he resigned it.

All this time India was in a state of profound peace; but an incident occurred illustrative of times now bygone, and of the spirit that was working in young Lawrence. He went to Nee-much to see what had been described to him merely as a 'tomasha' (an extraordinary sight). It turned out to be a case of suttee. Lawrence, seeing a number of his own troopers present, asked them whether they would stand by him if he attempted to rescue the woman. They were quite willing; and he, approaching the funeral-pyre near enough to address the woman, told her that he was ready to save her life if she desired it. She expressed her gratitude for the offer, but declined it, saying that she was quite willing to die. 'Immediately afterwards the flames enveloped her, and in a few seconds she was burned to ashes. Her calm intrepidity was most astonishing, especially as she had not even the excitement of her husband's body to be consumed with her, only a portion of his clothes, as he himself had died far from his home.' But the long spell of inactivity was ere long to be broken by something more tremendous than the prospect of saving the victim of a barbarous custom; there 'came the welcome order, in September 1838, to prepare for service in the field;' and Lawrence's regiment 'was ordered to join the army of the Indus, then being concentrated at Ferozepore on the Sutlej, for service in Afghanistan, to restore to his throne the Ameer Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk.' At first, all goes well; Ghuznee is stormed and captured, and Lawrence is 'appointed prize-agent by the Bengal column.' As the force advances, however, towards Cabul, trustworthy information is brought to the effect, that Dost Mahomed, Shah Soojah's rival, had escaped with his family; and Lawrence forms one of a party which, under the command of the gallant Captain Outram, starts off in pursuit. The pursuit is fruitless; and they who went upon the wild-goose chase, have to give it up, and make the best of their way to Cabul, where they arrive 'to bear the usual fate of the unsuccessful,' including, of course, the banter of kind friends. However, 'now that Dost Mahomed had fled the country, and no active opposition to the government of Shah Soojah was manifested in any quarter,' affairs were considered pretty secure, and Lawrence was installed temporarily in the post, which he afterwards filled as permanently as the course of events permitted, of military secretary to Mr (afterwards Sir William) Macnaghten.

Coming events now begin to throw their dismal shadows before; and an appalling description

is given of the celebrated Khyber Pass. The day of English humiliation, however, was not yet fully come. Dost Mahomed surrendered; and suddenly, as if by magic, the whole of Afghanistan assumed an appearance of tranquillity—a specious and a short-lived tranquillity. The city of Cabul was perfectly quiet until a certain day in November 1841; and then news was brought to Lawrence that 'the shops were all closed, and crowds of armed men were filling the streets, and surrounding the houses of Sir Alexander Burnes and Captain Johnstone, which had been set on fire.' What man could do, Lawrence did, to inspire others with a little of his own dash and decision; but, alas! neither Brigadier Shelton nor General Elphinstone would listen to him, and, commencing with the murder of Sir Alexander Burnes, whose house was at the same time burnt, a series of incredible disasters was inaugurated. 'Vacillation and incapacity,' says General Lawrence, in his *Reminiscences*, 'ruled in our military councils, and paralysed the hearts of those who should have acted with energy and decision. By their deplorable pusillanimity, an accidental émeute, which could have been quelled on the moment by the prompt employment of a small force, became a formidable insurrection, which ultimately involved the ruin of a gallant army, and brought down on our country a stigma, from which, in the East at least, she will never totally recover.' Things went from bad to worse; the British troops became demoralised; the Afghans saw that 'we were afraid to act on the offensive;' to act on the defensive was ruin; and 'Retreat! retreat!' was the cry. Sir William Macnaghten protested, but in vain; and, as a last resource, negotiations were re-opened with the Afghan chiefs. Then followed that fatal conference between Sir William Macnaghten and Mahomed Akbar Khan. Lawrence himself was present; but he did not actually witness the murder of his chief. He was himself suddenly disarmed, pinioned, and carried off a prisoner; and all he saw, as he turned round, was Sir William 'with his head down the declivity, struggling to rise, and his wrists locked in the grasp of Mahomed Akbar, horror and consternation being apparent in his face.' But it afterwards came out that, 'quick as thought, Akbar shot Macnaghten through the body with one of 'Lawrence's 'own pistols,' which Akbar had lately expressed a fancy for, and had been presented with. The tragedy took place on the 23d of December; and on the 27th of the same month, Lawrence was liberated, through the influence of the formidable chieftain, named Ameenollah Khan, by whose advice Lawrence urged on 'General Elphinstone the expediency of avoiding the Khoord Cabul passes in his retreat, as they were under the authority of Mahomed Akbar Khan and his Ghilzyes, who were not to be trusted, but to proceed through the Zoormut country.' General Lawrence speaks in unsparing terms of the apathy shewn on the occasion of Sir William Macnaghten's murder, whilst he eulogises Sir William himself as his 'beloved and ever-to-be-lamented chief,' whose 'own service and his countrymen at large have reason to be proud of him, and to respect and cherish his memory, falling, as he did, a martyr to his public duty.' As to the charge of apathy, he says: 'Thus, almost within musket-shot of our intrenched position, and in broad day, a British envoy had been

barbarously murdered, and his mangled body allowed to remain for hours where he fell, and finally to be carried off by a savage mob, to be insulted in every possible way, and paraded through the city, without an attempt being made on our part to save any of the party, or to avenge this unequalled outrage.' It is hard to believe that such language is applied to the behaviour of Englishmen confronting Orientals, of Englishmen akin to those of whom it might have been said during the Indian Mutiny, 'One man of you shall chase a thousand.' But, certainly, an Afghan is not as some other Orientals are. No wonder, then, that the Afghans began to swagger, and that Sultan Jan should have declared to Captain Lawrence, as he then was, that 'one Afghan was equal to five European soldiers.' But Captain Lawrence was equal to the occasion. 'Sirdar,' he instantly replied, 'you have never yet met a European in fair fight; and now, little as I am, if Akbar Khan will promise to release me if I overcome you in single combat, I am ready to fight you to-morrow morning, big as you are.' The tempting offer was not accepted.

To resume. Captain Lawrence, as has been said, was liberated, and sent back to the English cantonments. December ended; and the new-year opened ominously with heavy falls of snow, and all was gloom, misery, and confusion. Warning was sent to General Elphinstone 'on no account to leave the cantonment, for no trust could be placed in the promises and oaths of the insurgents.' Nevertheless, orders were given 'for each fighting-man to take three days' provisions in his haversack, and the force to be ready to march at daybreak' on the 6th of January. Captain Lawrence 'had solicited to be placed in charge of the ladies and children, with the late envoy's escort of cavalry and infantry, about 150 strong; and his 'place was assigned in the rear of the advanced guard.' And so the retreat began; and 'at nine A.M. the troops moved off, a crouching, dispirited army.' Not an Afghan was to be seen as they left the cantonment, and slowly picked their way through the snow, 'the men sinking a foot deep each step, even in the regular track, and several feet if they missed it, and wandered off.' But no sooner had the rear-guard 'cleared the gate,' than the Afghans, like a swarm of hornets, were upon them. From that moment commenced a scene of horror, suffering, disgrace, and, nevertheless, of individual heroism, the general outlines of which are only too well and too generally known, and the particulars of which, if they were to be described, would occupy more space than can be spared, and, to use the words supposed to have been addressed to Dido by Æneas, would simply 'renew unutterable grief.' Let one example suffice. 'For God's sake, Captain Lawrence, don't leave me here!' an English voice was heard to plead. Lawrence dismounted at once, and found a sergeant of the 44th Regiment, who at first appeared only to have 'lost his left hand,' but, when he was raised up, it was found that, 'from the nape of his neck to his backbone, he had been cut to pieces.' 'What use is there in lifting him up?' said the bystanders; 'he cannot live many minutes.' Lawrence reluctantly assented to this, and told the poor fellow there was nothing to be done for him. 'Then, for God's sake, shoot me!' said the sergeant. 'Even this I cannot do,' answered Lawrence sadly. 'Then leave me to

die,' said the sergeant resignedly; and so perforce he was left. Of all this heart-rending retreat, Captain Lawrence may be said to have been an eye-witness; for though, after the first day or two, he was made over as a hostage to Mahomed Akbar, and marched with the Afghans, and not with the British force, he saw all 'the awful spectacle the road presented.' His condition may be considered to have been in some respects better than that of the majority of his brother-officers, fellow-countrymen, and fellow-soldiers; but even his position was far from enviable, when he was liable, at one time, to be surrounded by tigerish Ghilzyes, brandishing 'long blood-stained knives,' pointing exultantly to the heaps of corpses, and with savage menaces, crying that not one would be spared.

At length, after eight and a half months' captivity, during which 'perished our Cabul army, sacrificed . . . to the incompetency, feebleness, and want of skill and resolution of their military leaders,' and the aged General Elphinstone, 'whose suffering of mind and body had been intense, but he bore all with fortitude and resignation,' was mercifully released by death, the happy day of deliverance came, and Captain Lawrence and his late co-captives 'were met,' as he says, 'by the gallant General Sale, my brother Henry, and other officers, with the 3d Dragoons and the 1st Light Cavalry.' It is not remarkable that, after all this, Captain Lawrence had 'a very dangerous illness,' and 'was forced to return on furlough to England.' In September 1846, he was once more in India and in harness; and in the following December 'the Governor-general (Hardinge),' he says, 'considering, from my intimate acquaintance with the Afghans, that I was suited for the post, appointed me principal assistant to the Resident, and political agent on the western frontier at Peshawur.' On Sunday, the 20th of February 1847, he entered the city of Peshawur; the whole city poured out to meet him; and 'loud were the complaints of the poor people and their demands for justice, many of them carrying fire on their heads as illustrative of their extreme misery and grief.' With what energy, promptness, and success, Major Lawrence, as he appears at that time to have become, proceeded in the discharge of his new duties, may be best surmised from an anecdote related by himself. He and his assistant, Lieutenant Lumsden (now Major-general Sir H. Lumsden, K.C.S.I., C.B.), set out to correct matters in the Eusufzye country. After a while, he came one day upon some 'Sikh soldiers reclining by a well, under the shade of some trees,' and overheard their conversation. 'How is it, brother,' said one, 'that not a Sikh has been murdered this time? Formerly, when we visited Eusufzye, not a day passed without several of us being killed.' 'It must be,' replied a comrade, 'because these people are afraid of the two white faces.' The two 'white faces' were, of course, Lawrence and Lumsden.

Not even a Lawrence could avert the great Sikh revolt. It broke out, and once more he was a prisoner and in peril. His captors, however, were fain to ask advice of him; and a proud day it must have been for him, when, after the famous battles of Chillianwallah and Gujrat, he 'stood by Gilbert, as the Sikh army, consisting of 16,000 men, passed him, each man, on throwing down his arms, receiving a rupee to enable him to support himself until he reached his home.' Major Lawrence was

appointed deputy-commissioner of the province of Peshawar 'under the government of the Punjab'; but, in course of time, his health was so seriously affected by the climate, that he requested 'to be transferred to some other post.' The request was granted in July 1850 by Lord Dalhousie, who, in a very handsomely expressed letter, nominated Major Lawrence 'political agent in Meywar, in Rajpootana.' It is quite a treat to observe the cordial and affectionate but thoroughly manly relations existing between Major Lawrence and his brother Henry. The two were frequently brought together in the discharge of duty; and in 1857, when Sir Henry was removed from the post of 'Governor-general's agent for the whole of Rajpootana,' to the chief-commissionership in Oude, that is to say, to that which was to be his death, he was succeeded by Major Lawrence. 'Feeling convinced,' says the latter, 'that the mutiny was general, and that no portion of the native Bengal army could be relied upon,' from the very first outbreaks at Meerut and Delhi, 'it was not without dismay that I contemplated our position in Rajpootana.' The dismay was certainly not groundless; but it did not prevent him, as has already been remarked, from coming triumphant out of the furnace of trial, and, though the celebrated Tantea Topee thrice entered Rajpootana, from keeping the peace, save for a few petty disturbances throughout the region. In April 1859, Lawrence took a well-earned furlough in England; in April 1864, he retired altogether, 'after a service of forty-three years;' and he now rests, comfortably, it is to be hoped, on his laurels. His *Reminiscences* are as interesting as a romance, and as instructive as a course of lectures.

LATE ADDITIONS TO THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

THIS immense national storehouse of objects of antiquity, natural history, art, science, and literature, has recently received vast and costly accessions, and appears to be year after year drawing new classes of visitors. We learn that during 1873, as many as 576,019 persons were admitted to the various departments. Of that number, 442,264 visited the general collections; 103,971 were readers; 1345 were students in the Manuscripts Department, and 6281 in the galleries of Sculpture; and the rest were visitors to those portions of the great building in which are stored the Ornaments, Coins, and Medals, &c. The number of visitors to the great circular Reading-room, for the purpose of study or research, was about 1000 less than in the previous year; and it is curious to notice how slightly the number has varied during the past six years, excepting only in 1870, when the total fell to 98,971. The number in 1873 shews an average of 356 daily (allowing for Sundays and cleaning days), and each reader appears to have consulted, on an average, *thirteen* volumes per diem.

The accumulations in the Department of Printed Books proceed apace, for, during the period of which we are treating, no less than 105,697 *articles* have been received; these *articles* are necessarily

of a very miscellaneous description, and comprise volumes, parts of volumes, pamphlets, newspapers, books and pieces of music, &c. They have been acquired in various ways, partly by purchase, and partly by donation, but mainly by the operation of the copyright laws (which compel the forwarding of a copy of every book published to this and certain other libraries) and of the international copyright treaties. One of the most important acquisitions recently made, is 'a copy, believed to be unique, of the original edition of Tyndale's "Exposition of the fyrste Epistle of seynt Jhon," printed abroad, and issued in September 1531, while Tyndale was at Antwerp. This work was strictly prohibited in England, and in the following year was denounced by Sir Thomas More, in these terms: "Then have we fro Tyndale the fyrste pystle of saynte John in suche wyse expowned, that I dare say that blessed apostle rather then his holy wordes were in suche a sense byleved of all Crysten people, hadde lever his pystle hadde never ben put in wrytynge." The reprint of the work by the Parker Society was made from a later edition.'

Even languages little studied or known in this country are not neglected, for the Museum authorities purchased, in 1873, a collection of Chinese classical and historical works, which formed a portion of the library of the late M. Pauthier; and we may here mention that the somewhat difficult and very laborious task of cataloguing the Chinese books in the library is going on satisfactorily, and that the catalogue is already partly set up in type, and will probably be published early in 1875.—The binding operations in connection with the Museum Library have assumed considerable proportions, for we find that the number of volumes sent to be bound in the course of last year amounted to 11,428; while 539 pamphlets have also been bound, and 452 volumes repaired.

In the Department of Maps, &c. the most interesting acquisition of the year is 'a photograph fac-simile, the exact size of the original, of the superb Mappemonde made at Venice in 1457-59, at the instance of Prince Henry the Navigator, and at the expense of his uncle, King Affonso V., by Fra Mauro of the Camaldalese Convent of San Michele di Murano, on account of which a medal was struck in his honour by the Republic, describing him as *Cosmographus incomparabilis*.'

The Manuscripts Department does not, as we have seen, attract many students at present, but as its existence and value get better known and appreciated, their numbers will, doubtless, rapidly increase. The acquisition of Manuscripts during the past year is as follows: General Collection, 240; Egerton, 129; Charters, 3046 (of which 2826 are comprised in a collection principally formed by Christopher, Lord Hatton, fifteen being of dates before the Conquest). To this Department there has been added 'a very richly illuminated book of the *Hours of the Virgin*, written in France at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The borders are of arabesque work, with birds, and insects, and grotesque figures. The Calendar is illustrated; and there are fourteen larger miniatures, painted apparently by an Italian artist,

or by one shewing strong Italian influence, who has also added to the ornamentation throughout the volume. The titles of the offices are in letters of gold.' Mrs Balfé has presented the scores of the operas composed by M. W. Balfé, in his *autograph* (in forty volumes); and Mrs Grote has presented the note-books and collections of the late Mr Grote, connected with his *History of Greece*, together with *Political and other Essays* (in twenty volumes). During the year, sixty-three manuscript volumes have been added to the Oriental collection; they are in fourteen different languages, including Japanese, Persian, Coptic, Chinese, Cingalese, &c. The more remarkable are: 'A poetical account of the Chinese conquest of Nepal in 1790 A.D., written by the Emperor of China—a folio volume, inclosed in curiously carved wooden covers, from the Summer Palace near Peking; the entire text is embroidered in red silk on blue ground, it is said by the ladies of the Imperial family;' and 'a history of the Mikados in Japanese—thirteen volumes inclosed in a box of lackered wood. This work, it is said, was written for private use, and has never been printed.'

In the Department of Oriental Antiquities, we find that 'a temporary case has been placed in the Nimroud Gallery; and a portion of the objects obtained by the mission of Mr G. Smith to Mesopotamia, and presented by the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*, has been exhibited in it. This mission, which has enriched the Assyrian collection, was carried out at the expense of the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*;' and among other improvements, we are told that 22 Assyrian bricks have been framed and glazed! The number of additions during 1873 was 1163, many of which are of a very curious and interesting nature; such as, the 'Basalt fragment of a dial or clepsydra, having on it representations of Philip Arridæus, 324–316 B.C., in adoration to the god Khem, or Min, and other deities; on it is inscribed OCT., the beginning of the month October.'

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales presented to the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities 'a quadrangular *stelé* of white marble, on the four sides of which is inscribed a decree of the city of Rhodes, recording the raising of a voluntary loan for the defence of the city in some great emergency. The names of the contributors to the loan, and the sums subscribed by each of them, are recorded on the marble. Three transcripts of this decree are ordered to be inscribed on *stelæ*, and set up in three public places in the city. From the character of the paleography, this decree may be referred to the third century before Christ; and from internal evidence, it is not unlikely that the emergency for which the loan was raised was the celebrated siege by Demetrius Poliorcetes, 305–304 B.C. This inscription was formerly imbedded in the pavement of the Church of St John, in Rhodes. After the Turkish conquest, this church became a mosque, the vaults under it being used as a powder-magazine. In 1856, the powder exploded, and the church was destroyed. The *stelé* was broken into a number of fragments, but the main part of the text was fortunately uninjured.' Among the purchases we find 'a chalcodony scarab, on which is engraved, in an archaic style, a draped male figure playing on the lyre. . . . The back of the scarab is carved in the form of a

Satyr's head.' A splendid collection of antiquities of various kinds was purchased of Mr Alessandro Castellani, comprising bronzes, fictile vases, terracottas, marbles, &c., of which we regret that the limits of a brief magazine article will not admit of our giving more detailed particulars. Mr C. T. Newton reports, with regard to the excavations at Ephesus, that Mr Wood has continued the exploration of the site of the Temple of Diana, and has succeeded in determining its area by tracing the remains of the platform on which it was built.—To the curiosities of the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography, there have been added, among many other things, 'a hat of plaited ivory, stated to have belonged to Queen Elizabeth;' 'a "black-jack" with the initials of King Charles I., and the date 1646, and an old English leather "bottel";' 'an ivory tankard, carved with a bacchanalian procession in high-relief, and set with jewels; a salt-cellar of ivory with similar designs, mounted in silver-gilt; and a gold box with enamels of oriental design, formerly belonging to Queen Charlotte—all bequeathed by Lady Frances Vernon Harcourt.'

In this part of the Return we are informed that 'the Christy Collection is open on Fridays by means of tickets, to be obtained at the British Museum.' Considering that the collection is housed at 103 Victoria Street, Westminster, we are not surprised to find that the effect of this somewhat absurd regulation has been to reduce even further the small number of visitors, for it is hardly to be expected that many people will go all the way to Bloomsbury for permission to inspect the contents of a few rooms in Victoria Street. Some of the additions, however, to this collection are very interesting, especially those classed under the heading, 'Ethnography of Asia.'

The Departments of Natural History are evidently progressing in a most satisfactory manner, if any confidence can be placed in figures, for we find, from Professor Owen's report, that the number of specimens added in the year 1873 was 30,424. Of these, 10,644 have been registered in the Department of Zoology; 18,501 in that of Geology; and 1297 in the Department of Mineralogy. In the Zoology Section, we are told that the most important acquisition for the 'Birds' branch was the purchase of Mr A. R. Wallace's collection of Malayan birds. This gentleman travelled in various parts of the Malayan Archipelago during the years 1854–62, with the object of studying the natural history of those islands, many of which had never before been visited by naturalists, and are still most difficult of access to collectors. An account of Mr Wallace's travels, and the more important results, is given by him in his well-known work, *The Malayan Archipelago*. Many other birds, reptiles, fishes, mollusca, &c. from various parts of the world, have been added to the treasures of our national storehouse; and among the insects, we note especially that twenty species of *Coleoptera* from Japan, new to the collection, were obtained by exchange from G. Lewis, Esq.; two new species of the genus *Figulus*, the first representatives of the genus received from Japan, were among the number.

The Department of Prints and Drawings has been enriched by the addition of 10,015 objects, of which 2017 were obtained by presentation. Further, 'the second volume of the Catalogue of

Satirical Prints and Drawings has been published, and comprises, in nearly a thousand pages, entries about eight hundred in number, dealing with the political and personal satires of the period from June 1689 to 1733, especially those illustrating the contest between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, the wars with Louis XIV., including the war of the Spanish Succession, the final defeat of James II., the French "Universal Monarchy," the High Church and Low Church parties, the Calf's Head Club, the South Sea and Mississippi schemes, the early history of the Opera, the modern stage and pantomime, lotteries, the *Dunciad*, Sir R. Walpole and his Exeter scheme, and the early works of Hogarth. The third volume of the Catalogue is progressing towards completion, and comprehends a list of subjects of equal interest with those which we have just enumerated, and in this Department great progress has apparently been made towards the better arrangement of its very valuable contents.

THE MANOR-HOUSE AT MILFORD.

CHAPTER VI.

Come on, Sir Knave; have done your foolishness,
And tell me how thou hast disposed thy charge.

THE dog-cart containing Sailor and Collop drove stealthily along in the gloom and falling snow, and by-and-by they reached Thornton Common. Here the darkness was still more intense. It was only possible to cross the common by trusting to the instinct of the horse, a strong, useful, hired hack, who had a tolerable notion of the direction of his stable. At the same time, in allowing him to select his road, it was necessary to permit him to choose his pace also, and his favourite pace was a slow walk. It became inexpressibly wearisome, this snail-like plodding through the darkness, vainly straining the eyes to make out some leading mark or feature of the landscape that might convey an assurance of being in the right track. Sailor bore it all tranquilly; his life had seasoned him to such patient waiting; but Collop fidgeted and fretted, and could hardly restrain his impatience.

When, as it seemed, they had got into the very middle of the common, the horse suddenly came to a full stop, put his nose to the ground, sniffed and snorted, but refused to proceed any farther; and in answer to the application of the whip, sidled, and began to back.

'Hold hard a bit, there, Master Collop,' quoth Sailor. 'Perhaps there's something in the road. I'll jump down and see.' He suited the action to the word, and felt cautiously all round with his feet. Presently he struck against something soft and yielding—a snow-drift, it seemed, that had a core of some harder substance. A low smothered groan came from out this heap of snow as Sailor tried to kick it away. It was a man, who was lying with his feet in the ditch, and his body across the road.

'What cheer, my lad?' cried Sailor, diving into the middle of the drift, and seizing the man by the waist.—'Here, Mr Collop, here's a craft as has

grounded here. Come and bear a hand to get him off.'

The man was carried to the dog-cart; and by the light of the lamp, Sailor recognised his face—it was Tom Rapley. He was in a sort of trance, and it seemed at first as if it would be impossible to arouse him. Sailor began vigorously to rub his hands and the back of his ears; and presently he opened his eyes, and tried to move. When he had revived a little, they hoisted him into the back of the dog-cart, covered him as warmly as they could with rugs and greatcoats, and started for Biscopham. It was a long, dreary drive: the way seemed interminable; but at last the first faint gleam of a distant gas-lamp shewed them that they had come through the dangerous part of their journey. Tom had recovered his senses a little on the way; and when the trap came to a stand-still opposite Collop's shop, he was able to dismount with a little assistance. Emily was aroused, and Tom was put into a warm bed, and hot drinks given him. When he began to come to himself, he was in a great state of mind about his wife, who had been left alone all the night, and on whom the excitement and suspense might have the very worst effect: however, there was no help for it. It would be impossible to cross the common till daylight had come.

The morning after the snow-storm broke fine and cheery. The fields were covered with a white sparkling garment. The sun rose up from out a haze of violet and gold into a pure blue sky, pale and cold, but cheery.

The early sun made quite a bright and pleasant scene of Back Milford's. The yard was sparkling with flaky, untrodden snow; and the sunbeams were refracted into a myriad of rainbow jewels, in festoons of glittering icicles. The privet hedge gleamed with prismatic colours, and the old wood-house looked like a fairy grotto in frosted silver.

These early sunbeams aroused Mrs Rapley to a full sense of her misery and desolation. Till now, she had hoped against her inward conviction, that Tom had been detained by the storm, and had staid for the night with some friend in the village, waiting for the morning's light to find his way home in safety. But now it was broad daylight, and he had not come. She felt sadly ill and worn; the baby was crying desperately, and would not be comforted. Surely she was altogether abandoned and deserted.

By-and-by, she heard the soft sound of wheels, that ceased at the gate; and then she sat up in bed, with fear and expectation. Yes, there it was, as she had in her secret heart known it would be—the sound of many feet; they were carrying a burden—it was Tom, whom they had brought home dead!

There was Sailor's voice, and another, gruffer, but not Tom's. No; she would never hear that voice again!

'Mrs Rapley, Mrs Rapley!' cried Sailor from below; 'how are you getting on?'

They were going to break it to her gently, but she would know all at once. She sprang from the bed, and ran hastily to the door: 'O Sailor, what have you done with him? Oh, tell me quick, the very worst; what has happened to Tom?'

The next moment, he held her in his arms, and his rough rimy beard was against her cheek.

'What business have you out of bed, old woman? You go back directly, and lie quite still, while I talk to you, for I've got good news for you.'

But after the first burst of joy at seeing her husband safe home, there came a revulsion of feeling. Why had she been made to suffer so poignantly; had she not had enough to bear other ways?

As she heard, however, of Tom's doings the night before—of his extreme peril and marvellous escape, she forgot her own sufferings in the thought of what might so easily have been; and when he told her of the appointment that was vacant, and of the chance he had of getting it, the news seemed to be a very satisfactory equivalent for the miseries of the preceding night.

'He's down-stairs now,' said Tom—'Frewen, I mean; that's how I contrived to get back so early. He has driven us over, Sailor and me, in his phaeton. A pair of horses, and everything grand. Oh, he's a regular gentleman, is Frewen! And he's come to look over the house. He's bound to do that once a year, by the will, and the year's just up since Aunt Betsy died.'

'I'm off now, Rapley,' cried Frewen's voice from below. 'I shan't disturb your good wife. I suppose you haven't broken a hole through the wall up there?'

'No, indeed, sir,' said Tom, coming down-stairs laughing. 'Good-bye, sir, and many thanks to you.'

'Tom,' said his wife, when he came up again, 'you misled Mr Frewen just now. Look there!' she cried, and pointed up at the hole in the wall.

'Good gracious!' cried Tom, turning pale. 'Who did that? I must go and tell Frewen about it.'

'Don't be silly, Tom; but sit still and listen, while I tell you how it happened.' Tom listened incredulously to his wife's description of the noises of the night. He attributed them to his wife's imagination and fears. But when she told him of the thing that had jumped through the wall, he couldn't refuse to believe in that, for there was the patent fact of the hole to confirm his wife's narrative.

Tom got on a chair, and examined the break in the wall. Then he saw that there had once been a doorway here, with an open space over the door, which once might have been glazed, but was now only papered over. 'It was the cat,' cried Tom in a voice of derision; 'the old black cat, that was mousing over her old hunting-grounds. She must have seen the light shining through the thin paper, and made a spring right through it? But how did the cat get into the house; and what could have frightened her?'

The strangeness of these occurrences, however, gradually faded from their minds, under the influence of newer and more powerful impressions. Sailor might have thrown some light upon the matter; but Sailor didn't choose to say anything about what he had witnessed that night in the old barn. He was a cautious old fellow; and he didn't care to make an enemy of his neighbour, Skim, who, he knew, bore him a grudge already.

Tom Rapley was soon plunged in all the excitement of a canvass and contest for the collectorship. It was a long-protracted affair, and there were many candidates, but Frewen's influence carried the day, and Tom was elected. It was midsummer, however, before he got his appointment, and Michael-

mas before he could get to work, so that he had his hands full to get in the next rate by Christmas. Tom, nevertheless, was full of new-born zeal, and very pleased and proud. He was somebody in the parish now, and could take his part in the evening discussions on parochial matters at the *Royal Oak*, and speak with authority. People left off calling him Lord Tom, and saluted him respectfully as Mr Rapley. He wouldn't, however, give up the rent-free house and the ten shillings a week from Mr Frewen, notwithstanding that they were dreadfully cramped for room. What with the baby and little Bertie, and the cooking and the washing, and the chatter and noise that were always going on, Tom found it desperate hard work to get on with his accounts. And there was the big house lying empty and sealed up beside them.

Tom had got to make the new rate, and fill up all his receipts, before he could begin to collect; and although he tried hard and did the best he could, he was very much afraid that he should be behindhand with his work.

'Tell you what, Lizzie, I shall go clean distracted, and out of my mind, if this goes on,' he cried one day, when the noise and confusion were worse than usual. 'I'm making all kinds of mistakes, and I shall be all wrong with my accounts; and then, what will become of us?'

'Well, I don't see how I can manage any better, Tom,' said Lizzie: 'my hands are full enough—you ought to have a room to yourself, where you can work quietly without any bother.'

'Ought stands for nothing,' said Tom despairingly.

'Stop a bit!' cried Lizzie; 'I've thought of something. Now, don't you bother me for a minute, Tom. Yes, I've got it.' Lizzie ran up-stairs; and when she came down, she told Tom that he had better go for a walk till things were quiet, and that, if he liked, he might call at the *Royal Oak*, and talk to Aunt Booth. In fact, she kept him out of the house all day long, under one pretext or another; and when night came, and it was time to go to bed, Lizzie took him up-stairs with an air of pride and mystery, and shewed him a door opening out of their bedroom into the unused house.

'Now,' said Lizzie, 'you see what I have been doing all day long. Walk into your office, Mr Overseer!'

'O Lizzie, how could you do such a thing! Why, Frewen will find it out, and then he'll turn us out of the house, and take away our allowance too.'

'Why, Tom, I've only taken out some nails, and pulled down some laths, and knocked away some plaster, and sawn away a stick or two—that's all!'

'You've only broken into Aunt Betsy's house—that's all!' muttered Tom.

'But come in and look,' said Lizzie coaxingly, 'how nicely I've managed everything.' She opened the door, and revealed a neatly furnished room with a carpet on the floor, and in the middle a mahogany table, with Tom's books and inkstand and blotting-paper, laid out in a neat and orderly manner. 'There's light, too, from the skylight in the daytime; they never blocked that up at all.'

'Yes, it's all very nice,' said Tom—'very nice indeed; only, I'm afraid old Frewen will not be pleased.'

'Pooh!' cried Lizzie. 'As for Frewen, I should like to see him coming prying into my bedroom—I'd send him out in a hurry.'

'But it's in the will, dear, that it's to be done,' said Tom solemnly.

'Then it's in my will that it shan't be done, and surely one woman's will is as good as another's.'

On the whole, Tom didn't refuse, next morning, to avail himself of his new office; and he got on so well with his work, that he began to be quite reconciled to the arrangement, and owned to Lizzie that he thought the risk of Frewen's finding them out was very small.

Tom Rapley got on very well indeed with his first collection; very well, that is, as far as getting the money went, for people were inclined to grumble at him, as being far more strict and exacting than his predecessor Patch. 'I'd never a voted for you, Tom Rapley, if I'd known you'd be as sharp as this upon us,' was the remark of more than one of his former supporters. Some people, too, were uncommonly spiteful. One old lady, who lived in a cottage by herself, and who had given Tom a deal of trouble before she would pay at all, put the money in coppers upon the window-sill, and bade him take what he wanted. He found, when he came to handle them, that they were pretty nearly red-hot, and he was obliged to drop them more quickly than he took them up. However, he got the money in one way or other; but the next matter that troubled him was, how to dispose of it.

He had the money all in gold. He wouldn't take cheques; Frewen had advised him not to do it. He couldn't be always running over to Biscopham to present cheques; and Frewen told him that any delay in presentation might make him liable to the parish, if any should not be duly paid. Tom was very nervous about his responsibility; but he thought he wouldn't be wrong if he had the money all in good golden sovereigns. As the money grew in amount, however, Tom became more and more uneasy. He had over five hundred pounds in the house. The premises were lightly built and badly secured; many people knew of the money that was lodged at Tom's house, and there were several men in the village whose characters were none of the best—among others, Skim; and, unluckily, Skim had looked in one day when Tom was counting his money, and had seen the sovereigns tumbling one over another on the table; whereat his face had lighted up with a gleam that made Tom shudder. Most people in Tom's situation would have banked the money; but there was no bank nearer than Biscopham, and to take it there involved losing a day, and the expense of hiring a conveyance, unless he went in on market-day and by a carrier's cart. Besides, Tom was nervous about banks also—they broke sometimes. Now, as long as he had got the money in gold under his hands, he was safe; and yet, when he looked at his bag of coin, it struck him how easy it would be for anybody to make off with it, and how useless to try to trace the money, once gone. There was this advantage about gold, however—he could hide it wherever he pleased, and it would take no harm. He might put it down the well, for instance, or bury it in the garden. And yet, he would never know a moment's peace if he left the gold hidden outside the house: he would be always imagining

that somebody had watched him, and was now possessing himself of the treasure.

After much thought, Tom made up his mind to hide the money, and hide it in the empty house. That was guarded and secured at every point, and was further protected by the superstitious fears of the villagers. The house, shut up and abandoned, had acquired the reputation of being haunted; all sorts of tales were told about the place—of lights seen, and sounds heard in the dead of night; and few of the inhabitants of Milford would willingly pass the place after dark.

The arrangements of the old house were all familiar enough to Tom. The room he occupied as an office was over the large front-kitchen, which occupied the whole of the ground floor of that wing. The landing of the back staircase leading to the kitchen was just outside Tom's office-door, and that door once opened, he would have access to the kitchen, and could hide his money under one of the bricks in the floor easily enough. There was no danger of any one getting in there; and if they did, how should they suspect the existence of the buried treasure?

Tom went up to the blacksmith in the village, and telling him that he had lost the key of his cupboard, procured a bunch of old keys and a file. The lock of his office-door was not a complicated one, and with a little filing and adjustment of a key, he soon contrived to open it. Then he went back to his own kitchen, procured a light, locked the outer door, and proceeded to explore his way to the basement of Aunt Betsy's house.

Mouldy and musty, smelt everything about the old place. Dust was everywhere, and cobwebs with great fat spiders, who hurried off into crevices at Tom's approach, and lay there doubtfully, with one cruel hairy talon stretched out, wondering, perhaps, if the end of everything were come, or only a bigger fly than ordinary, that might by-and-by be entangled, and sprung upon, and devoured. In the bricked passages below, a settlement of ants had established themselves, and raised a nest; whilst the earthworms had thrown their castings all along the crevices. Tom made his way to the kitchen, looking neither to the right nor to the left, everything seemed so dismal and woful. He had some little difficulty with the kitchen-door, for the lock was of a different pattern, and finally he was obliged to use a screwdriver, and take the lock right off.

The kitchen looked desolate indeed. The black beetles had permanently camped out on its floor, and covered it with their odious battalions. At the sight of Tom and the lighted candle, they retreated indeed, but did not take to flight. 'They were so unaccustomed to man, their tameness was shocking to see.' Like Epic heroes among a crowd of ordinary warriors, huge cockchafers, with extended feelers, ran hither and thither, as if organising their followers, and urging them on to battle; whilst white venerable insects—the Nestors of this mirky host—formed the centres of groups which might be councils of war.

Tom stepped gingerly among the black beetles, and coming to the centre of the kitchen, looked curiously around. The range and boiler, which he had known so bright and polished in Aunt Betsy's time, were now covered with rust, and a kind of red, greasy perspiration. Between the stones of the hearth, straggling bleached grasses

had thrust themselves; and the soot that had fallen from the chimney had formed the basis of a sort of mould, on which there was a feeble growth of vegetable life. The saucepans still hung on their nails with their lids beside them, once of a silvery brightness, now rusted and discoloured. Plates and dishes stood all of a row above the kitchen dresser, covered with dust and grime. The eight-day clock in the corner was the only thing that kept its accustomed aspect—its face still shone out bright and clean, and the round moon and the astronomical emblems upon it were the only cheerful things visible.

Tom didn't stop long looking about him, but presently remembered what had brought him here, and he then began to consider where he should dig his hole, and hide his money. It must be in a place he should have no difficulty in finding again himself, and with that view, he couldn't do better than make the hiding-place in the very centre of the kitchen. Tom paced it out from corner to corner, and where his footsteps crossed each other, he prised up the bricks, and dug a hole. He had less difficulty in this than he expected. The bricks came up easily enough, and the ground below was quite loose and friable. He didn't dig very deep, for he was unused to the work, and he ached so badly across the small of the back, that he got quite weary and exhausted.

'This will do very well,' he said to himself. 'Nobody will dream of looking here for it; and people are too much afraid of the house ever to think of getting in.' He put his bag of money into the hole, replaced the earth, beating it carefully down, levelled the bricks accurately, and removed all traces of his work.

'There!' he cried, flourishing his spade over his head; 'that's a good job done, anyhow.' In his flourish he struck the low beam overhead, and hit some brown paper-bags that hung from the ceiling, scattering a lot of dust over himself.

'There go aunt's old dried herbs,' he said; 'all turned to dust, like herself.'

He did not replace the lock on the kitchen-door, and left all the other doors unlocked, that he might have easy access to his hoard, and made his way back to his own part of the house, feeling a good deal easier in his mind. Somebody was thumping against the outer door, and Tom went down to see who it was, leaving his tools up-stairs.

'I want to borrow a spade, Master Rapley!' said a rough husky voice. It was Skim's.

'I haven't got one!' said Tom, in a little confusion. He didn't like to own that his spade was in his bedroom.

Skim went off rather sulkily. Then said Tom to himself: 'If I hadn't hidden my money up so carefully, it would have frightened me to see that fellow about the place.' Skim had hardly been gone a minute, before Mr Frewen came in.

'Well, Tom,' he said, seating himself in a wooden chair in the kitchen, and smiling in an absent kind of way, 'I've come to look round the place.'

'Come to look round the place?' cried Tom, with some dismay.

'Yes,' said Frewen. 'According to the will, you know, Tom, I'm bound to inspect the premises every year, to see that everything is safe and right. I'll go up-stairs now.'

'Oh! that's a pity,' said Tom. 'Lizzie's gone

out, and she's locked up the bedroom, and taken the key with her.'

Frewen tapped his foot impatiently on the floor. 'What's that bunch of keys you've got there?' he cried, pointing to those Tom had unwittingly kept in his hand.

'Oh! those are some I got from the blacksmith; I lost the key of the wash-house.'

'Try 'em, and see if one will fit the bedroom.'

'Lizzie won't like that,' said Tom.

'What! Missus is master here, eh!' said Frewen. Come, I'll stand between you and harm. I don't want to have to come here again to look at the place; don't you see?'

'Perhaps Lizzie will be back directly,' said Tom, not knowing exactly what to do, and going towards the door to look out.

'Why, here I am, Tom,' said his wife, coming in at the half-opened door. 'What's the matter?'

'The key, Mrs Tom, the key!' said Frewen impatiently.

'What key?' said Mrs Tom, annoyed.

'Yes, my dear, the key of the bedroom: he wants to look over the place,' cried Tom, looking at her significantly, 'to see that all is kept in good order, you know.'

Lizzie realised the situation instantaneously, but for the moment she was at a loss how to act. Not only would Frewen discover the opening made into the old house—not only would they lose their dwelling and the ten shillings a week, but they would also, probably, incur the lawyer's ill-will, and jeopardise Tom's appointment. Mr Frewen had been a good friend in many ways. It was he who, in conjunction with Aunt Booth, had stood security for Tom's faithful performance of his duties, and if he were offended, and offered to withdraw, where could they get another surety?

'La! Mr Frewen,' she said, 'you can't come into my bedroom. The place ain't fit to be seen.'

'Oh, nonsense!' said Frewen; 'it's only a matter of business; just open the door, and let me look in.'

'Very well, sir,' said Mrs Tom: 'I'm ashamed to shew you the place, sir, it's so untidy. Won't you wait till I've tidied it up?'

'Pooh, pooh!' said Frewen; 'I haven't been married all these years not to know what an untidy room is. Come; lead the way!'

'Stop a moment!' said Lizzie. '—Tom, you must fetch little Bertie away. I couldn't have Mr Frewen go near him for all the world!'

'What does it matter?' cried Frewen. 'I've got children of my own.'

'But the scarlet fever!—'

'Scarlet fever!' cried Frewen, jumping off from the chair, and running out into the garden.

'Why didn't you tell me that before? Pretty noise my wife will make if she gets to hear of it. I shall be afraid to go home. Is the boy very bad?'

Lizzie looked dreadfully downcast, as she told Frewen that she didn't know how it would end.

Frewen stumped up and down the gravelled path. The thought had frequently suggested itself before; but now that he heard of the illness of the boy, it struck him with tenfold force: What a capital thing for my little lad if their youngster should pop off.

Yes; this contingent prospect, which was so little good to the Rapleys, would be a useful thing for him. That his boy should have a comfortable

landed property waiting for him when he came of age, and all the accumulations of a long minority, would add very considerably to the position and influence of the Frewens.

He was not a man to waste any time in profitless speculation on the future; but the news he had just heard put something into his head that he would not otherwise have thought of. He remembered those barren manorial rights which were useless to the Rapleys, but might be valuable to the Frewens. By-and-by, if his son should succeed to this property, it would render it more complete, if the full title to the manor were acquired.

'Tom!' he cried, beckoning him out. 'There; stand on the other side of that potato-bed.' Mr Frewen carefully took up a position so that the wind should blow from him to Tom—on account of the scarlet fever. 'Now,' he cried, 'Tom, I daresay you wouldn't object to a five-pound note?'

'Certainly not, sir,' cried Tom, with a grin.

'Well, a friend of mine, who owns some land about here, wants to buy a manor—that he may give deputation to a gamekeeper; do you understand? Now, you can give a title—it's worth nothing to you—and if you like to take a five-pound note, one of my clerks shall draw a conveyance, and bring it to you to sign.'

'Couldn't you make it ten, sir?' cried Tom.

'Certainly not. It's not worth five shillings. But as I wanted to do you a good turn— Well, it doesn't matter.'

'Oh, you shall have it, sir,' said Tom, 'at your own price. Am I to have the five now?'

'No; when the conveyance is signed. Well, good-day. Let me know how the boy is. Ready for your audit, Tom? got the figures all right?'

'Yes, and the cash too,' said Tom proudly.

'I've done better than any collector of them all, sir.'

'That's right, Tom—do your backers credit,' cried Frewen, turning to leave the premises. 'What nice order your garden is in, Tom. I didn't give you credit for being such a good gardener.'

'Well, sir, it's thanks to a neighbour of mine it looks so well; he gave it such a thorough digging over last year, that everything has flourished beautifully; and did it for nothing, too.'

'He's a good neighbour to have,' cried Frewen.

'Well, good-day, Tom.'

'What a nice, pleasant man he is,' said Tom, going in-doors to his wife. The unexpected prospect of an extra five-pound note had quite warmed his heart.

'Pleasant he'd have looked,' said Lizzie, 'if he'd gone up-stairs.'

'Ah!' replied Tom, 'wasn't that a capital idea of mine about the key?'

'Much good that would have been,' rejoined Lizzie, 'if it hadn't been for that thought of mine about the scarlet fever.'

'Humph!' said Tom. 'I hope Bertie won't go and catch it after this: I should think it was a judgment. Well, I'm off to Farmer Brown's, to ask him to give me a lift to Biscopham to-morrow.'

That night, Sailor was paying his placid addresses to Mrs Booth at the *Royal Oak*, when presently Skim came in and thrust himself into the room uninvited. Neither of them cared for his company, but neither ventured to tell him so.

'Come, Sailor, how dull we are!' cried Skim. 'Come, tell us a story about your sailing round that there mountain.'

'What! about roun'ing Cape Horn?' said Sailor. 'Well, I don't think I ever finished telling you that story yet.'

'Oh! we haven't time for any stories now,' cried Aunt Booth snappishly. 'I shall story up the house, and go to bed. Come, my lads.'

It was barely nine o'clock; but when Mrs Booth made up her mind to go to bed, go she would. Skim and Sailor departed rather unwillingly. Sailor didn't like Skim as a companion; but he could hardly avoid walking with him, as they lived close together. As they went along, Skim began to talk about the old house, and the supposed sounds and sights that were heard and seen there.

'Did you ever see anything of the kind?' asked Skim significantly.

Sailor hesitated. 'Well, mate,' he said, 'I did see something there once.'

'When was that?' cried Skim.

'Why, 'twas the very night she died. I suppose you don't know that she came to see me that very night?'

'No,' cried Skim; 'I never knew that.'

'But she did,' said Sailor, shaking his head; 'and give me the office to go and fetch Charley Frewen; so that was why I went, and not out of no disrespect to you, Skim. Well, after the old lady had left me, I sat up a good bit; and just as I was going to bed, I hears voices outside, and lo and behold, there was Jem Blake, and Bill Edwards, and one or two more, as was going Christmasing; and they fetched me out, and we went round the village, singing carols, and all sorts of fun. And we'd had a glass or two here and there; and as we was coming home, says I: Suppose we go and sing to old Mother Rennel. And they all shake their heads at this; but I was feeling full of spirits, and so I says: Mates, I'll lay you a quart as Mother Rennel gives me a Christmas-box if I goes along there. Well, these other chaps wouldn't go on, and left me at the corner of the lane; and away I went, perhaps not keeping my course as direct as might be. I saw there was a light in the best bedroom window—a twinkling kind of light, as looked as if it would go out every minute, and I was just agoing to begin my song, when I see the light move, and shine in another window, and next I caught sight of it over the hall-door, and then it shewed right in the kitchen window. Well, I walks up the path to the window, and looks in. What do you think I see, mate?'

'I don't know,' cried Skim, who was all of a tremble.

'I see Aunt Betsy, I tell you! robed all in white, with a candle in one hand, and a spade in the other, looking ghastly enough to freeze the very marrow of your bones!'

'Well,' cried Skim; 'go on!'

'She stood for a bit knocking on the bricks with her spade, and then she moved off: and I moved off too, as fast as my legs could carry me; I was so skeared with her looks.'

'Was that all? Did you see nothing else?' cried Skim, feeling underneath his jumper as if for some concealed weapon.

'That was enough for me. I tell you I cut and run fast enough.'

'Where did you say you saw her stand?'

'Right under them bags of herbs as hung in the kitchen—in the very middle of it.'

'Herbs did you say?' cried Skim, springing up half a foot into the air.

'Why, what's the matter, mate? Where are you off to, my lad?'

By this time they had reached the row of cottages, and Sailor paused at his own gate, astonished—for Skim, instead of turning into his cottage, started off in a sort of slinging trot on the way to Biscopham.

'What's his little game to-night?' mused Sailor, as he let himself in. 'However, it don't concern me, anyway.'

CHAPTER VII.

Sweet are the uses of adversity.

In the dark little counting-house at the end of his gloomy cavern of a shop, Mr Collop held solitary converse with his own thoughts late on one soft dripping night in December. These thoughts were not cheerful or enlivening. He had kept himself afloat another year, but at what a cost! Last year, if he had failed, he would have failed with the reputation of an honest but unfortunate man. This year, there would be another sort of tale to tell. All this time Collop had worked hard from morning to night, had lived penuriously, and drawn nothing but his bare expenses out of the concern. And yet so ill had he managed matters, that if he were obliged to suspend payment to-morrow, the chances are that he would have to submit to a criminal prosecution, on a charge of obtaining goods on credit for the purpose of pledging them to get money. What was the hidden drain, then, upon his resources? In a word, Frewen. The lawyer had cleared a little fortune out of Collop—all in a perfectly legitimate and honourable way, all in the way of costs, which Collop had paid from time to time, to avoid the extremity of an execution. And in the end Collop had not shrunk his debt one whit. He owed Frewen more than ever, although he had paid him hundreds and hundreds of pounds. Frewen had fastened on him like the octopus on his prey, enfolding him with a net of legal tentacula, and draining the life's-blood of him, whilst leaving his outward shell intact. Nor was there anything exceptionally harsh in his treatment, if it should be admitted that such an attorney must needs live. How would it be possible for Frewen to keep up his hospitable mansion and provide for his offspring in accordance with their way of life, if he didn't squeeze a man when he had a chance? Like the honest fair-trading Greek who owns the swift-sailing felucca—if you be well manned and armed, he will deal with you as if he were a brother; but waterlogged, helpless, and unmanageable, hoisting signals of distress—unfortunate merchantman that you are, better go to the bottom at once than signal for help to our disinterested Greek.

It was maddening to be the subject of this treatment, to be obliged to forfeit honest name and self-respect, to rob and deceive trading connections and creditors for the sake of a hated enemy, and without the slightest permanent effect. Collop had been driven to it step by step, and now he saw himself at the last extremity—his credit gone at last, threatened on every side, writs showering down upon him daily, Frewen waiting with keen intelli-

gent eyes to give a last squeeze to him on his own account, before sweeping everything away in the interests of the estate he represented. Collop had paid him ten pounds—the last ten pounds he had in the world—for a day's delay, hoping—he hardly knew what—perhaps, that the general ruin and destruction that To-morrow Morning was to bring might spare him from an ignominious end.

'Shall I come and post up the ledger, father?' said Emily, putting her head in at the counting-house door.

'No,' said her father sullenly, 'no. I don't think it will ever want posting again.'

'Why, father, what's the matter? Are you going to give up business?'

'I'm going to fail, Emily—to be a bankrupt—to see everything I have seized upon and sold—everything—do you hear?—except the clothes on our backs!'

'How are we to live, father?' cried Emily in consternation.

'I shall have to live in a prison; you, in the workhouse.'

'Can nothing be done? Can nothing save us?'

'Only a miracle.—Hush, Emmy! Who is that in the shop?'

Collop shook all over, as he did now at any unaccustomed footstep.

Emily went out to see whom it could be. She returned presently. 'It is that labouring man who has been to see you so often lately.'

'Tell him to come in, Emmy; and you go and get your supper. Don't wait for me; and eat as much as you can, for I don't know where another meal is to come from.'

Emily, in deep sadness and distress, but with that submissive meekness to which a life of abnegation had accustomed her, sat down to her solitary meal. She heard the murmur of talk going on in the counting-house, and thought it never would cease. The conference lasted a long while, and at the end of it, Collop put in his head at the sitting-room door to say that he was going out. He had received a sudden funeral order, he said, in reply to his daughter's inquiring glance. 'Don't sit up for me.'

Emily sat up, however, in the cold dull room, that was pervaded by the smell of corduroys and fustians: the fire went out, and the night grew colder and colder, but still she sat wrapped up in her shawl, shivering in her hard horse-hair-covered chair. Twelve o'clock struck—one and two, still her father had not returned. She grew seriously alarmed now, and would have set out to search for him, but she did not know in which direction to go.

At three o'clock he came in, with a strange light and excitement on his face.

'Where have you been, father?' cried Emily.

'Never mind where I have been, girl,' he said, sitting down to the bread and cheese that was on the table. 'I have met with a friend in need. Perhaps I spoke too hastily just now. I may tide over my difficulties yet. At all events, Emmy, we won't starve. Here,' he said, taking out a canvas bag—'here is a hundred pounds in gold. Keep it always about your person. Sew some of it in your stays, and some in your petticoat, and some keep in your pocket; do you hear? You must do it this very night, for we don't know who may be here to-morrow morning.'

'O father, but is it right?'

'That money doesn't come out of the business, I tell you,' said Collop, 'but from an old friend; but you must keep it about you, for if we have an execution in to-morrow, the men may seize it.'

SPONGE-FISHERIES.

SPONGES, to speak of them in a general way, are zoophytes, half-animal, half-vegetable. They grow on rocks in the sea, and fishing for them is a regular trade on the coast of Greece, Syria, the West Indies, and elsewhere. In some instances they are secured by diving, and in others by being pulled up by a pronged instrument. Some new and interesting information respecting the Syrian sponge-fisheries, is condensed as follows in the *Pall Mall Budget*, from the commercial Report of a British vice-consul at Beyrout for 1873. 'The total value of the sponges fished on the coast of Syria is from twenty to twenty-five thousand pounds. The production is, however, falling off through excessive fishing, and the consequent exhaustion of the fishery-grounds. About two hundred and fifty to three hundred boats are at present employed in this industry on the coast of Syria, manned by about fifteen hundred men. The centres of production are Tripoli, Ruad, Lattakia, and Batroun on the coast of Mount Lebanon. The best qualities are found in the neighbourhood of Tripoli and Batroun; but the boats visit all parts of the coast, from Mount Carmel in the south, to Alexandretta in the north. The majority of the boats used are ordinary fishing-boats, three parts decked over, and carrying one mast with an ordinary lug-sail. They are from eighteen to thirty feet in length, and are manned by a crew of four or five men, one of whom is specially engaged for the purpose of hauling, while the rest are divers. In some cases, the men own their own boats, but generally they are hired for the season, which extends from June to the middle of October. No wages are paid; the remuneration consists in an equal share of the produce of the fishing. The profits of a good diver reach as high as forty pounds a season. Diving is practised from a very early age up to forty years, beyond which few are able to continue the pursuit. It does not appear, however, that the practice has any tendency to shorten life, although, as the diver approaches forty, he is less able to compete with his younger and more vigorous brother. The time during which a Syrian diver can remain under water depends, of course, on his age and training. Sixty seconds is reckoned good work, but there are rare instances of men who are able to stay below eighty seconds. The men on the coast, however, make extraordinary statements as to the length of time their best hands are able to remain under water, and gravely assert that eight and ten minutes are not impossibilities. The manner of diving is as follows: The diver—naked, of course,—with an open net around his waist for the receptacle of his prizes, seizes with both hands an oblong white stone, to which is attached a rope, and plunges overboard. On arriving at the bottom, the stone is deposited at his feet, and keeping hold of the rope with one hand, the diver grasps and tears off the sponges within reach, which he deposits in his net. He then, by a series of jerks to the rope, gives the signal to those above, and is

drawn up. In former years, the Syrian coast was much frequented by Greek divers from the islands of the Archipelago. Their number is now restricted to five or six boats annually, the skill of the Syrian, combined with his superior knowledge of the fishing-grounds, enabling him to compete successfully with his foreign opponent. Although they vary much in quality and size, sponges may be generally classified as—1. The fine white bell-shaped sponge, known as the 'toilet sponge'; 2. The large reddish variety, known as 'sponge de Venise,' or 'bath-sponges'; 3. The coarse red sponge used for household purposes and cleaning. Two-thirds of the produce of the Syrian coast are purchased by the native merchants, who send it to Europe for sale; while the remainder is purchased on the spot by French agents, who annually visit Syria for the purpose. France takes the bulk of the finest qualities, while the reddish and common sponges are sent to Germany and England. The revenue derived by government from this industry is a tenth of the value of the produce. The annual import of sponges from all countries into the United Kingdom amounts in value to about one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds.

AT THE OLD GATE.

AND so, we have met here again, love:

Here is my hand once more;
And with it the heart, now stricken—
So proud in the days of yore.
I knew not how much that I loved you,
When that word was spoken by me
That sundered our lives that night, dear,
And sent you over the sea.

Here I have sat all alone, love,
In the first fresh hours of Spring,
When the blackbird filled the twilight
With the songs that it used to sing
In the golden fall of that Autumn
That buried my heart's delight:
But never a song could I sing, love,
In the calm of the falling night.

I have waited long by this gate, love,
For a gleam of the days of old,
When the sunsets of Summer came down, love,
On their wings of amber and gold,
And lingered amongst the tassels
Of that bright laburnum tree:
There was glory above, 'mid the branches,
But never a gleam for me.

You thought that my heart was cold, love—
I knew that it seemed so then;
But maidens of seventeen years, dear,
Are not to be judged with men.
There's a beauty of trust we must soar to,
There's a love to which we must grow;
And these years have unsaid that word, dear,
That I spoke to you long ago.

There's a lingering kiss on my lips, love—
It has lain since yours touched mine;
There's a love in my life that is yearning
To cling to your heart as its shrine:
Ah! now you have taken that kiss, love,
And with it crushed out the past;
I have waited long, long at the old gate—
I have waited, but found you at last!

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